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Art militaire. n° 2

A FEW THOUGHTS

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VOLUME I.

BY

BRADFORD S. HOSKINS,

(LATE CAPTAIN H. M. 44TH REGIMENT,
AND MAJOR ON THE STAFF OF THE ARMY OF THE SOUTH OF ITALY.)

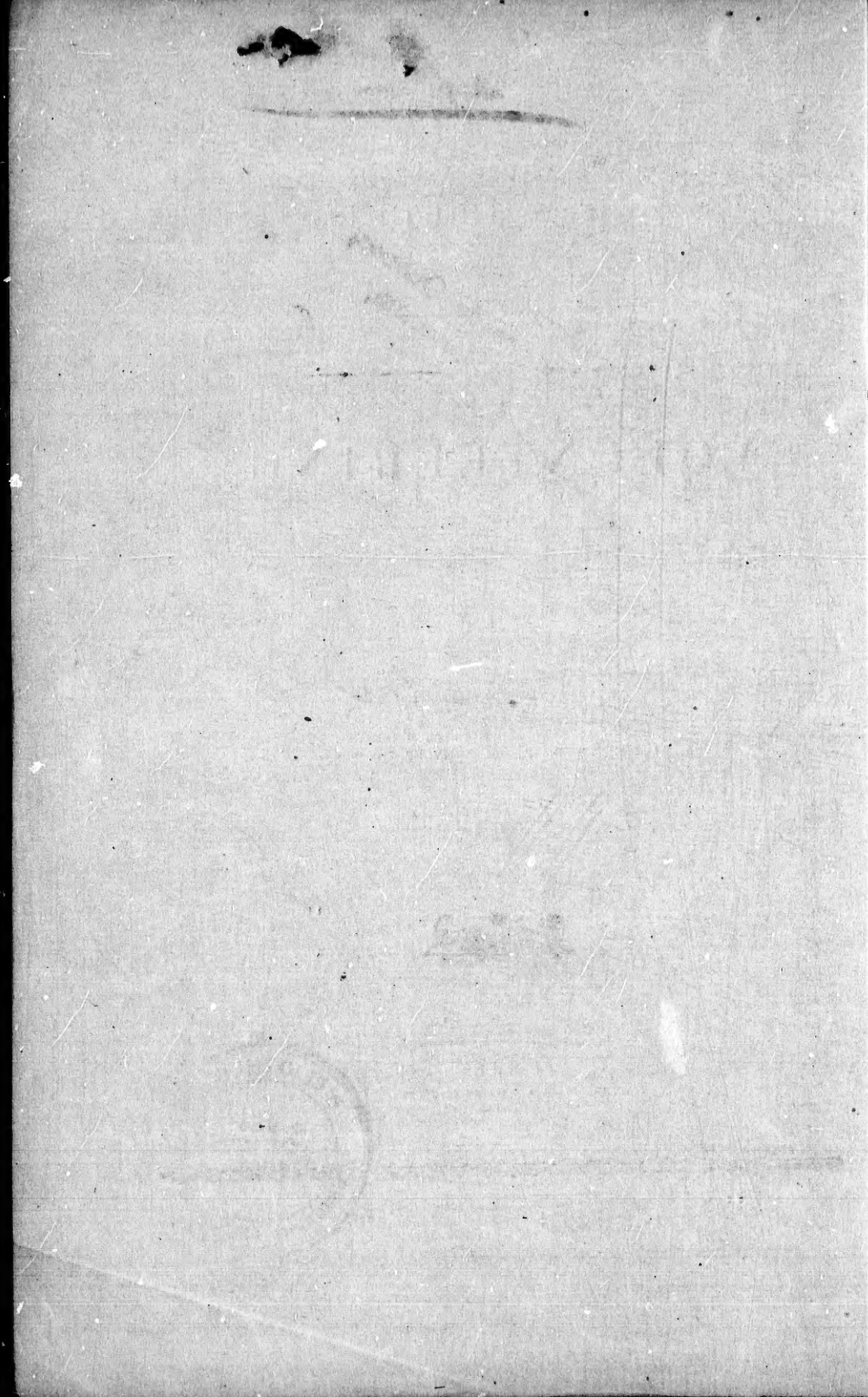


QUEBEC:

PRINTED BY HUNTER, ROSE & LEMIEUX, 26, ST. V. STREET.

1862.





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ON

VOLUNTEERING.

BY

BRADFORD S. HOSKINS,
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AND MAJOR ON THE STAFF OF THE ARMY OF THE SOUTH OF ITALY.)



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1862.

TO

His Excellency, Viscount MONCK,

GOVERNOR GENERAL

AND

COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA,

This Pamphlet

IS, WITH PERMISSION,

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

A Few Thoughts on Volunteering.

THAT the whole world is arming, and on a scale of magnitude unsurpassed in its previous history, is obvious to the most casual observer of passing events.

The great nations of the earth, now with one solitary exception, resting from strife, were never better prepared for deadly conflict than at the present moment.

In Europe, we see England and France vieing with each other in the magnitude and power of their armaments, both by land and sea. Austria has profited by the lessons she learnt at Magenta and Solferino; and now, with a thoroughly reorganized army, turns her attention to the fortification of her Venetian shores. Russia has recovered the hard blows of the Crimea, and is now, as she has ever been, one of the foremost in the march of war. Spain has lately shewn that she will not be behind the rest of the world in military power, and the will to use it. And the Italian nation, under the victorious auspices of Victor Emmanuel and the patriot Garibaldi, have proved themselves not unworthy of their Roman ancestors; while the civil war at present raging in the once United States of America, which has now lasted upwards of twelve months, shews us the American nation suddenly emerging from being a peaceful and enterprising people, into a military power, in numbers and capability of armament, second to none in the world.

The last few years have seen the greatest powers in Europe tested to their utmost strength in the Crimean and Austrian wars, and in the wake of renewed peace have followed wondrous and rapid improvements in the science and art of war, which experience, bought by the lives of tens of thousands of brave men, has alone brought to light

The guns that won the heights of Alma, and reduced Sebastopol to a mass of ruins, after a siege the most tedious and bloody on record, are seen no more; rifled cannon and the Enfield supply the place of the smooth bores and musket that won so many hard fought fields. The stately fort of granite has given way to the massive and Phoenix-like earthwork, and an age of iron seems drawing over the naval world. In illustration of these rapid improvements, the duel between the iron-clad rivals, the "Merrimac" and "Monitor," had no sooner engrossed the attention of the scientific world by the apparent perfection to which the art of building invulnerable vessels of war had been brought, than—*hey, presto, pass!*—half an hour's trial of an experiment in gunnery takes place in England, and Sir William Armstrong demonstrates to the world that these iron-clad monsters, so lately deemed impregnable, are as vulnerable to the fearful engines of destruction he brings to bear on them as were the wooden fleets of Nelson to the artillery of sixty years ago.

The civilized world seems to be at present engaged in a contest of warlike genius, in which the most stupendous experiments are dictated by the researches of science, and practically illustrated by a perfection of art. Many of our traditionary usages of war are thus swept away; and one of the most startling occurrences on this onward march is the sudden appearance on the field of a class of men, until a few years ago unknown to the world,—I mean the VOLUNTEERS.

All honour be to the brave troops who have won us renown and the respect of the world, and who have fought and conquered for their country's honour, as they will ever be ready to do again when the trumpet calls them to the battle field; but in the present day we put our trust for defence at home as surely in the rifle of the civilian as we confide our honour abroad to the bayonet of the soldier. Volunteering has, like a new science, opened a new world of speculation and thought; and the strong will of the community to band themselves together for defence, has given birth to a Giant, powerful though inert, because happily not called upon to put forth his strength; but powerful as

the God of battles, and more terrible because of strength unknown.

The defence of a country has from time immemorial been effected by the maintenance of large and powerful armies, perfectly equipped and thoroughly drilled; and also, in order that this system of defence should not fail by reason of large bodies of men being sent out of the country when the dignity of the nation required that it should take part in political struggles abroad, by the enrolment of its male population and citizens between certain ages, into a well-drilled Home Guard, available for defence against aggression. By the introduction, however, of the volunteer system, the necessity of these establishments, always costly and often ruinous to the preservation of a flourishing Exchequer, is to a certain degree obviated by a country whose people possess the unity of will to come forward and voluntarily supply the means of defence, without entailing this enormous expense upon its resources: and as an immediate consequence, they obtain the end sought—the security of the country from invasion—without the heavy burthen of taxation that the maintenance of a large military force must of necessity bring upon them. Without this unity of will, however, such a happy state of things cannot be hoped for in any country. It is the grand principle that has given birth to, and sustains, this new and now generally adopted means of obtaining military power. Whether the motives that sway individuals to enlist in the cause be purely patriotic or merely personal, matters little, so long as this unity be maintained. Without it, the principle of action is lost, and the common bond is of necessity dissolved. It is, in fact, a practical illustration of one of the grand theories of life, "Union is Strength."

That some such feeling at present pervades Canada must be obvious to the mind of every one who casts an observant eye upon the affairs of the day, and as recent events have shewn, not before it was wanted.

War indeed, falls like a thunderbolt upon a nation, and an indolent security in the time of peace generally entails

fearful consequences upon a country when the tocsin of war resounds through the land. A disputed point of international rights, which leads to misunderstandings and recriminations between diplomatic powers—an insult given, and through the blindness or obstinacy of those in power, unatoned for promptly by due apology and reparation—not to mention the unblushing demands of a wish for aggrandizement of power or territory—may, and often have, at a few hours notice, plunged two nations into deadly strife with each other ; and woe to the one that is unprepared for the struggle. If we wish for an evidence of this, we need only look back a few years at the history of England. When the trumpet sounded to call our brave troops to the seat of war in the Crimea, the rust of a long peace was found to have eaten into our armour. Though our transports carried the best of our English blood to those now war-worn shores, we landed, as our allies justly remarked, “an army of regiments only.” While their wants were supplied with the regularity of clock-work ; want, misery, and disease for many long months revelled amongst us unchecked. A defective commissariat, an utter want of land transport, a medical staff and system most inadequate to the wants of the army, and the greatest confusion and recklessness in the despatch of the necessary stores and provisions from home, were faults that soon told their tale, and were justly attributable to the listlessness which from so long a peace had been allowed to pervade the Home Departments. Hardship on service is what the soldier in his earliest lessons is taught to expect, and bravely did our men meet their trials. During that terrible first winter, when from hardships, want and disease, they looked more like walking skeletons than any other semblance of humanity, no nearer approach to a murmur was ever heard than now and then from some starved and worn out soldier the words would unvoluntarily escape, “Would that the next shot might take me to my last account !” To the miseries that were the lot of our brave troops while they were earning undying glory at the bayonet’s point and cannon’s muzzle, through the fatal neglect which had allowed the *ménage* of war to waste away in the security of peace—to the hecatombs of brave warriors sacrificed at the shrine of misery and disease, when time-

ly caution would have preserved them to test their strength against their country's enemies—history now points as a warning that cannot be mistaken. Nobly did England respond to that warning voice from the battle field, and ere the war was over, a second army, the finest that had ever left her shores, stood forth in all its glory to uphold its country's honour. Perfect in every arm, in training, *physique* and *ménage*, it was the envy and admiration of our allies, and even of our enemies, and remains a lasting memento of the boundless resources of our country. But by what terrible sacrifices was this perfection attained? What a warning it conveys to those nations who would neglect in time of peace to be ready against the exigencies of war! And now, when the power of raising and maintaining a vast military force is rendered comparatively easy, by the Volunteer system, that nation is indeed to blame for its own fall that will not seize the means of security within its grasp.

The Volunteer movement, however, as it is now happily adopted and carried on in England, gives to a country at once a security in its own resources that places it beyond the reach of the accidents of war, at least so far as any attempted invasion of its shores or frontiers is concerned. And the nation whose sons take up the rifle of their own accord, and band themselves together in the time of peace into a voluntary army, supervised and instructed by men of military training and experience, need never fear the approach of the invader, or the horrors of war upon its thresholds. In the English system the adjutant, sergeant-major and drill sergeant, of the respective Volunteer corps, are on parade at least once, and in many instances two and three times a day, to receive all comers. Drill goes on whether the muster be great or small, and some few every day improve in the new art they are learning. Thus a school of arms is formed, but the pupils are the creatures of their own will, not of coercion, and being so, the more readily and surely learn their lessons. The framework and skeleton of a regiment is laid, in which the routine of military discipline goes on daily, but the men are free to come and go as they please, and it is astonishing how many come, and what good soldiers and marksmen

they make with comparatively little practice. As a proof of this we have only to glance at the Volunteers of England to see men steadily drilling of their own accord, and enabling the commanding officers of their respective corps to turn out a force on an average once a week for battalion drill, equal in numbers to a regiment of the line, and second in point of efficiency and intelligence to no Militia of twenty-eight days' training, while armies of fifteen and twenty thousand Volunteers are now frequently seen (conveyed perhaps some fifty or sixty miles to the "rendezvous" at their own expense) manœuvring on the plains of England with the aptitude of veterans.

The comparatively trifling expense which this practice entails upon a country is one of its most important features. One of the great principles that sustain the movement being a determination on the part of the people that everything connected with it—their time, services, and even equipment—shall be *voluntarily* given; they are so tenacious of their object, and so fearful lest this ruling principle of the movement should in the slightest degree be encroached upon or hampered by the too free acceptance of assistance from the Crown, that the wealthy come forward liberally to its support, with the means fortune has placed at their disposal, and even the poor man prefers defraying the expenses of his clothing and equipment by easy instalments, to placing himself under the obligation of receiving the same as a free gift from the Government. None ask for pay, and thus at the comparatively trifling expense of a small portion of the armament and the pay of the instructors, a country is now enabled to raise an army of the same description and power as that which England is ready to pit against any foreign army that shall dare invade her shores, and far superior in "materiel" and intelligence to the militia that has hitherto been considered her only home guard. That the militia of England is a most useful and efficient auxiliary to the regular army no one will deny; both as a nursery for the army from which recruits can be voluntarily obtained when required, in a better state of preparation for the *business* of war than the raw material as it comes from the tail of the plough or the weaver's loom; and also as avail-

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able for the relief of the garrison towns when the army is required abroad; for the very simple reason, that it is composed of essentially the same materials as the regular army. The men are willing to enter for the *prestige* of soldiering, the bounty, and because the time devoted to their training does not interfere with the business of life, for being generally of the class who devote their labours to the tillage of the ground, a few days marching about and living in barracks or billets when the labours of the harvest have ceased, and the most anxious months of the farmers' year are over (which is invariably the season chosen for the period of their muster or drill) affects them only as a pleasant relaxation from the toil of the field, while the pay which they receive during that period compensates them for loss of time, and enables them to support their families. They deserve the thanks of the nation for their readiness to devote whatever time they can spare to strengthen its defences, and the voice of the English people reaches them through the military officers appointed to inspect and report upon their annual efficiency—seldom in censure—more frequently by far in terms of well-merited praise.

But it is to the *Volunteers* that not only the eyes of England are at present turned with fond approbation, but the attention of the whole world is directed with undisguised interest. A movement so simple in its organization has assumed dimensions that kings and emperors deem worthy of their closest attention, as a means of obtaining one of the grand ends of Government—security through power.

It must strike any observant person, even if he be not possessed of military knowledge, that the "materiel" of which any Canadian military force would be composed, must be essentially an amalgamation of the identical classes of men, which separately compose the Militia and Volunteer forces of England; for while on the one hand, many of those whose services would absolutely be required to swell the ranks of a defensive army in case of a threatened invasion, could ill afford to give up the time required for

the training necessary to make them efficient, or indeed at all useful for their country's defence, without receiving such a remuneration from the Government in the shape of pay, as would enable them to support their families during that period; there are yet many of those, who if an army were marching over their frontier to invade the sacred rights of their hearths and homes, would willingly rush with fixed bayonet upon the ranks of the enemy, and pour out their last drops of blood in defence of their country's honour and those they love; to whom not only the continued attendance during a set period of drill in the year would prove extremely prejudicial, to their own interests and also to the interests of others, but who, being placed by the capricious hand of fortune above the necessity of asking from their country an equivalent for their services in the shape of pay, would gladly prove their loyalty and patriotism by devoting their leisure hours to the pleasurable exercise of Volunteer drill, defraying at their own expense the necessary cost of their equipment. The expense of the clothing, arms and accoutrements of the Volunteer has always proved a serious drawback to the practicability of the poor man joining the movement, for there are many who can and would gladly give their spare time, whose means will not permit them, in justice to themselves or their families, to make this necessary outlay. It has, therefore, been found desirable in England to establish a permanent fund with each Volunteer corps, maintained by subscriptions from the more wealthy and influential members, and those around them whose sympathies are enlisted in the cause, for the purpose of enabling those of the poorer classes whom it is deemed desirable to admit into the corps, to join the ranks of the Volunteers; by defraying the expenses of their uniform, accoutrements, &c., the outlay of which is refunded by easy instalments. A trifling subscription from each member on his being enrolled also assists this desirable object materially; and a portion of the rifles being furnished by the Government (25 to every 100 men) lessens greatly the general expense of the formation of the Volunteer battalions.

It is doubtless for these reasons and with these views that the regulations which affect the military organization

of Canada afford opportunities to all classes to attain with ease that perfection in military knowledge and discipline which is necessary to make them efficient in the field; by a judicious blending of the established code of rules which governs the Militia and Volunteer forces of the mother country.

It is, however, to the latter class—to the *Volunteers of Canada*—that I would address these remarks; to those men whom the spirit of patriotism leads to devote voluntarily whatever time they can spare from the manifold duties and pursuits of life, to the due attainment of such military skill and habits of discipline as will enable them, if need be, to swell the ranks of the patriot army that would stand forth boldly and fearlessly on its native soil to confront the rash and grasping invader, and confident in its strength, hurl defiance and destruction at his head.

The large extent of frontier which, in the event of an attempted invasion of Canada, would be subject to attacks, and the rapidity with which large bodies of troops can be massed together at any given point, through the agency of steam and railroads, renders the organization of a large and efficient military force indisputably necessary for the perfect security of the country from all chances of the horrors of war; and as the experience of the world has shewn that there is no quicker, surer, and more economical method of raising such a force than by the Volunteer system, it is surely the duty of every man who has his country's good, and the security of all he holds dear, at heart, to foster and encourage, by every means in his power, by his influence and example, money and services, the diffusion of this martial spirit among the people. The chances of invasion may be happily remote, but the only true security is in strength, and the man who would neglect in time of peace to add to the safety of the country by refusing to uphold a system of defence that is countenanced and adopted by the highest powers in the world, might some day regret in bitterness of heart, when a hostile army was devastating the land, that he had not through its assistance become an accomplished soldier, instead of presenting himself as an awkward and useless recruit to encumber the ranks of his fellow-countrymen.

Already have we seen the effects of this movement abroad. In England, whose resources have ever been heavily taxed to enable her to keep up a force that will place her on a par with her martial and formidable neighbours, we have seen her sons come forward, and of their own accord form themselves into a home army, over 400,000 strong, well drilled, disciplined, and perfect in the use of their weapons; pronounced by the highest continental judges to be fully equal to any emergency, and creating universal surprise by their perfection in drill and their superior intelligence. While in America we have seen how this system works in all the stern reality of war, and what a wondrous power it gives to a nation possessing the unity of will to carry out this grand scheme. Perhaps no clearer evidence can be given than the struggle that is now going on in that continent, to shew that large armies of volunteers can be brought into the field when required, and with a little practice in the somewhat rougher usages of war than they are accustomed to on their own parade grounds, can be manœuvred and brought into close action with the same practical results that we have been accustomed to see accomplished by regular armies; and though due allowance must be made for the exaggeration of reports that come some thousands of miles from the battle fields, we cannot doubt that the volunteers composing the rival armies who are now arrayed against each other in all the deadly animosity of civil war, do their work as effectually as the difficulties under which they naturally labor will permit them. Battles have been fought with varying success to either side, and the numbers engaged on recent occasions shew that they are not unapt pupils in the art of war. The great fact, however, that these events shew is, that within a far shorter space of time than under the old "*regime*," an army of half the size could have been raised, equipped, drilled, and brought into the field, these two large armies have met, fought, and conquered in several large and well-contested battles, and are still pursuing their deadly game with all the vigour that first brought them into action. Surely, a nation which possesses such a power is essentially a military one.

In Europe, too, we have, within the last three years,

seen them in the field, enduring the same hardships, fighting the same battles as the well-trained warrior, and in this instance, the first in which volunteers were ever matched against regular troops, gaining victory after victory, and finally utterly routing a well-disciplined army. Who has not followed with interest the career of the Patriot-Soldier, and General — the world-famed Garibaldi? who, landing on his native shores with a mere handful of volunteers, as the redresser of his country's wrongs, succeeded in a short time in driving a powerful army of regular troops before him like a flock of sheep, from one end of the country to the other! winning battle after battle, and besieging and taking fortified cities, not with regular and well appointed trains of siege artillery to batter down the stubborn walls into the "imminent and deadly breach," nor hordes of brilliant cavalry to pursue the flying enemy; but winning his way by the bayonets of his volunteers, his good generalship, and the terror of his name, until he had accomplished the work he had undertaken, and freed the greater portion of his country from the yoke of a tyrannical and meretricious dynasty. What more glorious termination to his short but victorious campaign could this gallant soldier and true patriot have made, or one that could have so endeared him to the hearts he had freed, than when on the heights of Calvi, with his army drawn up in battle array, he met the then future King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel, advancing to his assistance at the head of a numerous and well appointed army, the flower of the Sardinian troops; he was able to say to him, "This is the country I have conquered with my Volunteers, take it, it is yours."

Of the indomitable perseverance and bravery of these almost self-equipped and self-drilled troops I can speak as an eye-witness, having had the good fortune to be present with the Italian hero during the latter portion of his last victorious campaign. Lithe and active, combining the endurance of the Arab with the ferocity of the tiger, these Volunteers faced the heavy infantry of the Neapolitan army with the greatest perseverance. Encumbered with no useless baggage, they made the most tedious forced

marches with surprising ease. Often marching from day-break until long after sunset *without a halt!* Clad in their red flannel shirts, and loose white trousers confined at the ankle by leather gaiters, a dress peculiarly well adapted to continued exertion under a burning sun, as giving free and uncontrolled action to every muscle in the humane frame; with a blanket neatly rolled and slung horse-collar fashion over one shoulder, their water canteen and haversack over the other; they daily accomplished distances that seemed almost incredible to the more heavily accoutred troops to which they were opposed. If over-matched in numbers they instantly scattered, but like the Bedouins of the desert, only to appear again in the more harrassing form of skirmishers, and from every rock and tree pour a deadly fire upon the dense masses of the enemy. And when they met the foe in hand to hand conflict, their courage and devotion to their cause gained them many a bloody victory; as the dearly won struggle on the Volturno, when more than 3000 dead encumbered the plain ere the enemy fled, and the hard-fought battle of Melazzo fully testify. Perhaps it were not amiss to make mention here of a little band of 600 English Volunteers who, anxious to "follow to the field some warlike lord," placed their rifles and services at the disposal of the champion of liberty; and proved in more than one well contested skirmish what dependence can be placed on the British rifle when held by British hands. A soldier myself, who had been engaged throughout the grand tournament of European arms in the Crimea, I watched with interest their debüt in the theatre of war. Brought together at short notice from all parts of England and Scotland, composed of the many different ingredients that constitute our Volunteer force, the gentleman and man of noble blood shouldering a rifle and marching in the ranks alongside of the artizan and veteran of decorated breast, they presented a good test of what our British Volunteers could do on our own shores, were they called upon to take the field before the enemy. Their well-appointed and soldier-like aspect contrasted favorably with the badly clothed Volunteers of Italy, by whom they were welcomed with enthusiasm and delight, and well did they subsequently

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sustain the credit of our riflemen. Brave to a fault, I am convinced that the British Volunteers require only firm and judicious management to successfully encounter the best troops in the world.

Well do I remember the first time that little band met the enemy, certainly the first time most of them had ever seen a shot fired in anger. Ordered early one morning to take up a position in a woody and thickly enclosed country, as part of the advanced outposts of the army which was then besieging the fortified City of Capua, (not by the regular approaches of strategical science, but by a powerful "cordon" of troops cutting off all communication with the surrounding country), their advanced companies found an outpost of the "Bersiglieri," (the riflemen of the Sardinian army) on their left advance, hardly pressed by a vigorous sortie from the garrison. Without a moment's hesitation, two companies were thrown forward in skirmishing order to the support, others followed as they were detailed, and in a short time five companies were hotly engaged with the enemy, who appeared to be in force with the evident intention of driving in the outposts and breaking the besieging "cordon." The musketry rattled thick and fast until the enemy had approached to within a hundred and fifty yards. Then at a signal from their gallant Colonel, Peard, (better known as "Garibaldi's Englishman,") they dashed from their cover with a true British cheer, and fixing bayonets as they ran, charged a body of Neapolitan Infantry, computed at over 2,000 strong, who had been plying them incessantly for some time previously with a heavy fire of musketry, and grape from two field pieces. The result was the work of a moment. The enemy, who were lining a road, hurriedly broke and retired in disorder. Then came the most trying ordeal of the day. Every soldier knows that it is easy enough to *advance* under fire, but not always so to *retire* young troops with steadiness. The enemy having fled in disorder, and the Volunteers being now exposed uselessly to the point-blank fire of the guns of the fortress, it was deemed advisable to retire and reform them a little in advance of their previous position.

The order to "retire and close" was given, and was executed with the most perfect steadiness, every man marching steadily to the rear with his rifle at the "trail," as if on parade. The inference on my mind and on that of many others immediately, was, "if these men will act thus in a foreign country and under every disadvantage of being hastily brought together, almost strangers to each other and to their own officers, what will they not do when fighting in defence of their native land?" In this their first brush with the enemy they lost one officer killed, and about fifteen men killed and wounded, but their gallantry procured for them the universal admiration of the patriot army. The Neapolitans, from reports obtained subsequently from prisoners, owned to more than 100 killed and wounded on that occasion, thus proving the superiority of the Enfield in the hands of practiced marksmen.

This is, I believe, the first instance on record of British Volunteers being engaged in the field.

Thus we have seen, both in Europe and America, the Volunteer system tested by the experience of actual warfare, and the results prove the rapidity, ease and efficiency with which, through its assistance, a nation can put forth its strength for the purpose either of offence or defence. It is, however, in its *defensive* character that it confers the greatest benefits upon the human race, by enabling a country to oppose the inert yet powerful force of an armed determination of resistance to the grasping and treacherous intentions of the would-be aggressor, and securing by a firm attitude of preparation, immunity from attack.

A few words now to the Volunteers.

It is a common, though most mistaken idea, that all that is required to make a Volunteer is a certain amount of proficiency in drill, and a soldier-like and smart aspect. The science of rifle shooting, and the habits of discipline on parade, are too often neglected or placed as secondary considerations in the scale.

It is only by long practice that *perfect steadiness* is attained by *any* troops, and the Volunteer will do well to remember that although his company or battalion may appear well on its own parade ground, and go through *there* the prescribed "formula" of drill with accuracy and precision, yet on strange ground, and perhaps after the excitement of a march, it will require the *greatest attention* of every particular member to his duty to enable it to merit the approbation of lookers on, perhaps *critics*. It is only by the *habit* of attention that is acquired by continued steadiness at drill, that certain Volunteer corps have been able to call forth the unqualified admiration of military men, and to justify the "*esprit-de-corps*" that has made them the envy of others. By constant drill, even for short though *frequent* periods, a far greater efficiency is attained than by any other method; and the Volunteer who drills with attention finds that in a much shorter time than he at first expected, he has mastered the intricacies of drill, and is pronounced sufficiently learned in the military art for the purposes of defence. The mere *automatism* of a soldier's profession is easily acquired, especially by those who take an interest in doing so; but it is by the *knowledge of his weapon and its capabilities, and his proficiency as a marksman*, that the soldier of the present day has proved himself to be not the mere machine he used to be, but a being of intelligence and military education, well skilled in the knowledge of the power of destruction he is armed with, and formidable in proportion to his abilities.

An amusing extract from an old drill book of the year A.D. 1800, may serve to contrast somewhat favourably the soldier of the present day with the warriors of that time. Speaking of the science of musketry, it says:—

"There is no doubt but that the fire of the musquetry may be reduced to a theory; but so far from that being the case the soldier has no principle given him, for let the situation or distance of the objects be what they may, he fires at random. It is principally owing to the exercise of the target being so little practised that this ignorance

and deficiency of principle is so severely felt. In our firings the soldier is instructed always to fire low, yet no reason is given him why it should be so, except that the ball rises."

It then goes into the theory of musketry as practised in those days, and coming to the directions for taking aim, it says:—

"If at 100 toises (a toise is equal to two yards English), aim must be taken one foot below the mark in order to hit it; if the distance be more than 100 toises, aim must be taken above the mark, and so keep rising in proportion to the distance. Suppose a battalion of the enemy in front; if at 300 toises, aim should be taken three feet over the battalion; if at 200 toises, a foot and a half; if at 150, aim should be taken at their hats; if at 100, at the middle of the body."

Again it says:—

"To facilitate the loading quick, General Bland recommends that the cartridges should be made with such exactness that one *thump* with the butt-end on the ground will make them run down to the breech of the barrel, which, he observes, will save the time *usually taken up in ramming*; but as the ramming down of the cartridge is, in my opinion, very necessary, I must beg to offer some objections against the disusing it."

After giving many reasons to prefer using the ramrod, it says:—

"For these reasons when *the men are not too closely pressed by the enemy*, the ramming down of the cartridge should not be omitted on service."—"Instructions for Drill, and the Method of Performing the 18 Manceuvres." 2nd Edition, page 166.]

Now, however, when ranges vary up to 800 and 1000 yards, and may, ere many years are over, be prolonged far beyond that distance, the "*science of the musketry*" is somewhat altered, and I fancy the practice at some of the Volunteer rifle ranges in England would rather astonish the heroes of that day!

Practice will make a man familiar with the use of his weapon, and with the due allowance to be made for the "force of wind," &c., on occasion; but JUDGING DISTANCE CORRECTLY is the great "desideratum" of a rifleman, and nothing is more easily acquired. What is easier for instance than when out walking to fix the eye on some distant object, *always starting from some conspicuous object that can be seen from the point selected*, judge the number of yards, and count the number of paces up to it? If wrong, face about and impress upon the memory the accurate distance from the point occupied to the starting point. The same may be practised on horseback, though not so accurately, first ascertaining the number of paces a horse covers in his stride at a canter, or his relative pace at a walk, with that of a man. Another plan is to observe at what distance the features of a man become indistinct, the peculiarities of his dress invisible, or the outlines of his figure shadowy. In this way a habit of correctly judging distances over uneven ground is acquired more readily and correctly than in a set rifle range over a level surface. These last, however, are most necessary adjuncts to the Volunteer school of arms, when superintended by the proper instructors, and can be erected at little cost. Too great attention cannot be paid by the Volunteer to this most important branch of his profession.

"Obedience is the first duty of a soldier," and the volunteer should never forget that while he is on parade he is, or ought to be, one to all intents and purposes. He should obey with promptness and attention the commands of his officers, and do his utmost to enable them to perform their duty creditably. No private feelings should interrupt that harmony which is essential to the proper carrying out of all military duties. He should remember that the principle of military life is that of *responsibility*. An order once given, every man from the private upwards is responsible in an increasing ratio to his immediate superiors for the due and proper performance of it. In like manner if companies be badly drilled, or the officers in command of them deficient in knowledge, the battalion, though commanded by the best officer in the world, is liable to go

astray ; and in higher manœuvres, if colonels of regiments are inefficient, the movements of a brigade or division, and consequently perhaps of an entire army, are confused and irregular, and rendered liable to defeat. And this brings me to the officers.

It is an acknowledged fact in England that many of the volunteer officers know less about their drill than the men under their command. This results partly from no proper examination having been required of them when the movement first took place in the country, and from too great inattention to drill subsequently. The duty of an officer is not only to "exercise the officers and men under his command, in arms, and to use his best endeavors to keep them in good order and discipline," but *also* to have such a perfect knowledge of his profession as to be fully acquainted with all the smallest "*minutiæ*" thereof, and to be able at a glance to see *and correct* faults in those under him. To this end it is indispensably necessary that he should *begin at the beginning*, and himself go through every stage of the soldier's lesson. Too many volunteer officers seem to think that nothing is required of them but to appear on parade, give certain words of command, and shew off their uniform, careless of being able to set a fault right, or to study accurately the intricacies of drill ; than which nothing is easier, for in the system of military evolutions, like the science of mathematics, everything graduates most beautifully, and if properly grounded in the *axioms*, no one can well go astray. Nothing is more lamentable than to see a body of intelligent, well-drilled men commanded by a man who, with all the *pretension* has none of the knowledge, of the pomp and glory of war, and who confuses them and himself by his own ignorance. More attention to drill is, *if possible*, required by the volunteer officers than the men ; for, as every movement depends on their commands, they are useless unless they are perfect in their lesson, and if inefficient, they paralyse the orders of their superiors. The great fault among Volunteer officers seems to be that they trust more to *book* than *practice*. But the best memory in the world will never give that promptness in command that is gained by experience with the men, and too often a memory acquired

from study of the drill-book alone, though perfect in the necessary details when sitting in a room and performing fancied manœuvres, will fail the owner when placed before a company or regiment. Mistakes in the little technicalities of drill will of course frequently occur, some of them ludicrous enough, but these are easily rectified by practice. I remember once looking on at an adjutant's drill in one of the county towns in England, and for some time I had watched with curiosity one of the captains who was putting his company through a series of complicated manœuvres in such a way as not only to puzzle the brains of the men how to execute them but his own how to get them out of them. At last (it seemed to me as if in despair) he gave the word "halt"—"front"—"*stand-stock-still*"!!! Quick as lightning came the deep voice of the Adjutant—"no such word in the book, sir; I *suppose* you mean 'halt'—'front'—'dress!'"

However, with steady application to *actual drill*, the work of acquiring a readiness and promptness in command and steadiness in executing whatever orders may be received is soon accomplished by Volunteer officers, but only by *constant attention* to their duties. They should bear in mind that as the efficiency of their respective corps depends in a great measure, at least to *all appearance*, on their own ability, the men will soon lose their "*esprit-de-corps*" if they are exposed to ridicule through the inefficiency of their officers. Great judgment and good temper is also required from them on all occasions, for though the *strictest* discipline is required from those under their command on parade, yet Volunteers are *led* far easier than they can be *driven*.

No finer sight is offered to the world than a perfect regiment of Volunteers, such as are seen every day in the parks of London, the splendid grounds of the English aristocracy, and the common lands of the several counties. There are the nobleman and tradesman, the gentleman and artizan, shouldering a rifle and marching side by side in the same ranks, competing with one another at the rifle range with all the keenness of old sportsmen, and banded

together by a good fellowship, and by higher motives that bode far from ill to the nation. While the ladies of the land (God bless them!) with silver bugle and silken banner grace the chivalry that England now boasts for "defence not defiance."

That Canada may profit by the lesson, and remember in time that "Union is Strength," is the earnest hope of

THE AUTHOR.

Quebec, July 7, 1862.

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Vers la frontière orientale on trouve encore : le St. Jean, déjà considérable avant d'entrer sur le territoire du Nouveau-Brunswick, où il porte les eaux d'une foule de lacs et de petites rivières qui abondent en poisson et en gibier ; le Madawaska, qui sort du lac Témiscouata et se jette dans le St. Jean ; le Ristigouche, qui sépare le Bas-Canada du Nouveau-Brunswick, et dont l'embouchure, large d'environ 4 milles, est nommée la baie de Ristigouche ; le Matapédiac, affluent du Ristigouche, &c.

23. *Lacs* : Le lac Témiscaming, principale source de l'Outaouais ; le lac Abbitibbi, dont les eaux coulent vers la baie d'Hudson ; le lac St. Jean, traversé par le Saguenay ; le lac Champlain, situé presque entièrement entre le New-York et le Vermont, et dont la partie comprise dans le Bas-Canada s'appelle la baie de Missiskoui ; le lac Memphrémagog et le lac Mégantic, sur la frontière du sud-est ; le lac Témiscouata et plusieurs autres, situés sur le territoire en dispute entre le gouvernement américain et celui de la Grande-Bretagne (Appendice, No. 1) ; le lac des Deux-Montagnes, vers l'embouchure de l'Outaouais ; le lac St. François, le lac St. Louis, et le lac St. Pierre, qui sont autant d'élargissements du fleuve St. Laurent..... et une foule d'autres.

24. *Iles* : Les principales sont : l'île de Montréal, située au confluent du fleuve St. Laurent et de l'Outaouais, longue de 34 milles et large de 11, riche en commerce, en céréales, en fruits, et en pierre à bâtir de la plus belle espèce—peuplée de 50,000 habitants, et divisée en 9 paroisses, outre la ville de Montréal (a) ; l'île Jésus, séparée de celle de Montréal par un chenal qu'on nomme la rivière des Prairies, longue de 22 milles et large de 6, fertile en grains, contenant 3 paroisses et 8,000 habitants ; l'île d'Orléans, située dans le fleuve, à 3 milles et demi de Québec, longue de 19 milles et un quart, large de 5 et deux tiers, qui renferme 5 petites paroisses et une population de 5,000 âmes—remarquable par la qualité excellente de son

(a) Voyez l'Appendice, No. V.